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DELIVERED BEFORE THE

NEW ENGLAND SOCIETY

OF SAN FRANCISCO,

AT THE AMERICAN THEATRE,

ON THE TWENTY-SECOND DAY OF DECEMBER, A. D. 1852.

BY REV. T. DWIGHT HUNT,

Pastor of the New England Church.

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SAN FRANCISCO:  
COOKE, KENNY & CO. PUBLISHERS,  
STATIONERS' HALL, CORNER OF MERCHANT AND MONTGOMERY STREETS.  
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SAN FRANCISCO, December 23d, 1852

REV. T. DWIGHT HUNT:

DEAR SIR,

The undersigned, members of the New England Society of San Francisco, feeling desirous that the Oration delivered by yourself, upon the occasion of the commemoration of the Landing of our Pilgrim Fathers, at Plymouth, in 1620, should be published, would respectfully solicit a copy of the same.

With respect, Sir, we remain

Your obedient servants,

JAMES WILSON,  
STEPHEN P. WEBB,  
E. KNIGHT,  
J. R. ROBINSON,  
FREDERICK BILLINGS,  
C. D. CUSHMAN,  
F. A. HUSSEY,  
EDWARD P. FLINT,

HENRY F. DANA,  
LOUIS R. LULL,  
H. L. DODGE,  
J. D. HUNT,  
R. N. BERRY,  
A. G. RANDALL,  
J. PERRY, JR.,  
JNO. P. H. WENTWORTH,

SAN FRANCISCO, December 24th, 1852.

Gen. JAMES WILSON, Hon. STEPHEN P. WEBB, and others:

GENTLEMEN,

You are aware of the short time allowed me for the preparation of this Address. If, however, you judge it worthy of the form and circulation you propose to give it, I submit it to your disposal.

Respectfully Yours,

T. DWIGHT HUNT.

WHITTON, TOWNE & CO., PRINTERS,  
EXCELSIOR PRINTING OFFICE,  
128 Clay Street, near Sansome.

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# ADDRESS.

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MR. PRESIDENT,

AND GENTLEMEN OF THE NEW ENGLAND SOCIETY :

THE day we celebrate was like any other wintry day of 1620. Its cold, its snows, its rock and ice bound coast, its leafless forests whistling in the wind, or echoing to the whoop of the Indian, the howl of the beast, or the moan of the surf, were no more uninviting and forbidding than was usual in December, on the borders of a northern sea.

But the day will never be forgotten. It became the starting point in the history of a people, few only in their commencement, but whose institutions are to-day felt in the religion and government of every other. On that day a few families landed on the shores of a wilderness, whose children, in two hundred years, were to build their homes over the graves of a hundred tribes, and through vast forests and beyond mighty rivers, and over high and distant mountains, stand at last where we stand, and from the

Western limits of the New World look over to the Eastern limits of the Old. Those few men were our Fathers. We are proud to be their Children.

For the first time, since the discovery of the Continent, was a colony planted at the *right time*, on the *right principles*, in the *right circumstances*, in the *right place*, and by the *right men*.

More than a hundred years had been wasted in fruitless experiments. The Spaniards first entered on the career of discovery, conquest and wealth in the Western Ocean. Not, however, till after JOHN CABOT, a Genoese, under the patronage of Henry VII., of England, had discovered the American Continent, was their attention diverted from the Islands to the main shore. Florida was the first part of the present territory of the United States they attempted to colonize. But after several unsuccessful expeditions to occupy the soil and develop its wealth, extending their researches through most of the Southern and Western States, they left the country on which they had sought so faithfully, but so vainly, for gold.

The French next entered into competition for possession of the soil. After a few years of toil and suffering they yielded at length to Spanish invasion, and relinquished a Colony they had commenced on the shores of Carolina. Better success, however, attended their settlements on the banks of the St. Lawrence. A fort, a town, a trade, and cultivated fields, made them the first settlers of Canada. But the Colony languished through its existence and finally yielded to English arms. It commenced wrong. Men of enterprise were at its head, but they had no industrious

and virtuous yeomanry to carry out their plans. Twice France emptied her prisons on the new territory, and with criminals attempted to lay the foundations of a new empire. The folly was soon acknowledged. During the first winter one was hung, several were put in irons, and many others, women as well as men, were publicly whipped! From such material not even Cartier nor Roberval could form a prosperous community. It was not till Champlain with a better class of pioneers founded Quebec, that the colony of New France was firmly established.

In the mean time England had caught the spirit of France and Spain, and through several distinguished navigators undertaken to continue her discoveries and take possession of the Western shores. The honor of the first discovery of the coast already belonged to her. She now commenced settlements in Newfoundland and North Carolina. That at the North became permanent at once, principally from its proximity to the fisheries, which even then made England and France jealous rivals on the seas. That at the South at first failed. Not even the genius of Sir Walter Raleigh could overcome the obstacles in the way of the first settlements of the Roanoke.

That distinguished man and early friend of America, after fifteen years imprisonment, died under an unjust sentence, and by the hand of an ungrateful king. But the grateful citizens of North Carolina have reversed the judgment of the Court of James, and reared to their early patron an enduring monument, by giving his name to the present Capital of their State. It was a revival of the old "City of Raleigh," which had been founded more than a



hundred years before on the Island of Roanoke, and which enjoyed the distinguished honor of being the birth place of the first daughter, of English parents, born in the United States, in 1587. It was a noble act of a generous people, to honor its founder by renewing, in their present seat of government, that first but soon desolated city.

The next attempt of the English was made on the banks of the Chesapeake. This colony, after years of struggle, at length prospered. But even this, like other English and French colonies North and South, commenced wrong. It began with forty-eight "gentlemen," only four carpenters, and without a family. Its government, both civil and ecclesiastical, had not one popular element. Both Church and State were connected with a crippling and crushing power beyond the waters. The whole was too dependent on home capital and home control soon to stand or go alone. The first town, however, then built still stands; and, with the exception of Augustine in Florida, is the oldest in the Union. The noble State, of which the builders of Jamestown were the first founders, became the Mother of Presidents, of whom the first and best was the glory of Americans, the immortal WASHINGTON.

But Virginia, noble and great in and of herself, owes much of her glory to influences that went down to her from the North and East. In all other honors, except priority, Jamestown must yield to Plymouth.

Thirteen years after the first settlement of Virginia began the first settlement in New England.

That colony our Fathers planted at the *right time*. The time was approaching for the grand experiment of a popular

government and a popular religion—an independency and a purity in Church and State which are the perfection of both. For this period long preparation had been made. But the world had made progress slowly. Only by convulsions, that had put back society almost as far as they advanced it, had one generation taken the lead of another. Advances made in one age had been lost in another. Improvements made by one people had been obliterated by another. At times all the world's best treasures were threatened with loss in general war or universal oppression.

Egypt once took the lead of the nations. But all that remain of her ancient glories are the monuments of the pride and folly of her kings. Greece, borrowing some things from Egypt, and inventing and discovering others, has left structures magnificent in their ruins, and works of statuary, poetry and oratory, and a system of mythology, that will survive in unrivalled beauty—long after the last pillar shall have crumbled from the temples of her gods. Rome borrowed and plundered from her rivals, though she added the iron of her own nature to the milder productions of the south, both in her literature and her laws; and perpetuated at her capital and disseminated throughout her wide domains the arts and the civilization she acquired. Whereever she bore her arms she carried also her customs and her laws. Thus Spain, France, Germany, and finally Britain, received both their conqueror and their teacher.

On Britain, however, a sturdier, yet better growth of manhood grew up than the world had yet seen. After the struggles of various conquerors, the blood of many brave nations of the north were mingled in one superior race. In

the course of time, and by the general laws of human progress, the Anglo-Saxon developed into the leading nation of the civilized world. But there seemed, even then, to be a limit to civilization. Some new elements were needed in society to advance it. Some greater facilities were required to keep the world in motion. Moreover, what should prevent the reversion of the wheels whose onward revolutions had advanced mankind thus far? Doubtless, Christianity had raised Western and Northern Europe above the ancient world. But Christianity had stooped to paganism and folded its superstitions to her bosom. Its idols had been gradually set up in her churches. Its manacles had clasped her wrists and bound her down to the servitude of the powers of darkness. What then should prevent the return of men half civilized to complete barbarism? Why, with the weight of a corrupted Church, crushing the neck of the best nations of christendom, should not even England fall to the old level of Babylon and Egypt? Simply, because she threw the burden off. England followed Germany in throwing off the Papal yoke.

Preparatory to this the mariners' compass had come into general use. This had enlarged the sphere of human enterprise, and so enlarged the views of men. Then had followed the art of printing. This had afforded facilities for the diffusion of knowledge, and so awakened and given new impulse to human thought. Then had succeeded the Reformation, under Luther, in Germany. Thence it had spread into Switzerland, France and England. Thus conscience had been set at liberty. Liberty of person was soon demanded. The shackles had thus gradually fallen



from the mind and body of England, and thenceforward the world was destined to be free!

But not under Henry VIII., nor under the bloody Mary, was the English Colonization of the coast of the United States, commenced. They were both zealous Romanists, though they broke from their allegiance to the Pope, and had our shores been colonized under their patronage, the mitre as well as the crown would have been transferred to these States, and only another Europe would have grown up in mighty oppressions and deep degradation.

It was not till the fires of Smithfield had been extinguished, and Elizabeth, the head of established Protestantism, had succeeded to a long and prosperous reign, that the way was rapidly opening for the settlement of the New World. But, though eventually a firm Protestant, Elizabeth persecuted Protestants. That persecution brought forward into prominence the Puritans, a sect that had first attracted notice during the reign of Mary. The same persecution, continued under king James, drove a company of those Puritans to Holland. A part of the company, weary of waiting for toleration in their native land, sought, in 1620, on the borders of a savage wilderness, over the Western Ocean, "freedom to worship God." These were the founders of the colony of Plymouth.

At a time when inventions and discoveries had afforded facilities for the promotion of knowledge, and for the advancement and perpetuity of civilization; when reformation in religion had awakened the mind to think, and emboldened men to write and speak; when Protestantism had infused activity into the mind of the leading power of the world;

when the old feudal system, that had so long bound society by the iron law of caste, was yielding to the force of popular improvement; when religious dissension had awakened political discussion, and a thirst for religious freedom kindled desires for political independence; then those few exiles, inured to toil, disciplined by persecution, enlightened by observation at home and abroad, strengthened in virtue and practical godliness by a courage that had confronted kings and queens, sought a home and a church on the Western shore.

One year before, a pestilence had swept off the tribes inhabiting the coast where they landed, so that where they expected to meet the arrows of a savage foe, they found deserted wigwams, and the graves of those who built them. They found also, to their joy, an interpreter to the tribes that soon came to their settlement. That interpreter was an Indian, who had been taken by a previous party of discoverers, sold into slavery in Spain, but who, having escaped into England and acquired the language, had finally returned by another ship to his native tribe. Thus did these special providences of God, together with the signs of the times throughout the old world, conspire to indicate that the most favorable time for the establishment of a successful colony had come.

Again: The Colony of Plymouth was started on the *right principles*. It was a colony of *families*. Previous colonies on the coast had been communities of *men*. Such was the cotemporary settlement at Jamestown, at its commencement. Even its first reinforcement consisted only of "vagabond gents and jewellers" in search of gold. Not

till years of doubtful struggle, and almost failure, was an attempt made to correct the evil by the importation of ship loads of fair young maidens, to become the wives of the adventurous pioneers. Two cargoes of the precious freight were successively landed on the shores of the Chesapeake. They proved to be the most profitable investment of the colony. Virtue had then a home. Society, resting on the family basis, became permanent. Had it been so from the beginning Virginia would not have lost her first important years.

But the fathers of New England brought the mothers of New England with them. Wives who had shared with their husbands the persecutions of England and the privations of Holland, came to share with them the toils, the perils, but also the wild yet hopeful and delightful freedom of America. Noble wives of noble men, true to their heart's love, faithful to their husbands, their country, and their God, they were the angels of the Pilgrims over the waters and on the shore. They made the wigwam cheerful. Their voices in song made the spreading tree a temple. The voice and the forms of their children gladdened the forest home. Worthy Mothers of New England's daughters—they shall have a place by the side of the Fathers in the hearts of their children, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, to the latest generation!

The colony of Plymouth was, therefore, a colony of *permanent homes*. It was not a colony of commerce. Our fathers left England forever. They came to settle their children around their graves. They brought their hearts' best treasures with them, that no old attachments should take them back. Therefore they early loved the land that was to be the inheritance of their children. Therefore they

sought to conciliate the tribes that were to be the ally or the foe of their posterity. Therefore they cherished schools that should educate their descendants. Therefore they guarded morals and fostered churches that would bless distant generations. No mere adventurers thus live for the future. No temporary seekers of gold thus lay foundations for ages to come. Other colonists, North and South, looked back to France and Spain and England as the home of their old age. Their hearts, therefore, always clung to the soil and the institutions of the old world. The new world was to them only a place of temporary exile. They cared not how much they corrupted it. They made every endeavor to impoverish it. The least they could leave for those who should succeed them the better for themselves. Had such been the policy of our fathers, the waste wilderness they converted into gardens would have yielded only to scenes of still greater desolation.

The colony they planted was established on the principles of *equality* and *democracy*. There was no high blood among them to claim distinction by inheritance. There were no titles among them but such as the people conferred. From the same rank in life, they were on terms of social and political equality. Of choice, therefore, they readily adopted a republican platform on which to stand, though with true loyalty they acknowledged the crown of King James above them. For nearly twenty years the whole adult male population constituted the legislature. Before they left the Mayflower the first company drew up and subscribed a compact which was the germ of our present constitutional liberty. It was no patent of nobility. It was no grant of



lordly immunity. It was no title royal to lands unknown. It was a simple basis of a popular government for mutual protection. It was a concession of all private interests that would conflict with the public good. It was the organization of all individuals into a body politic, for the enactment of equal laws. That is true democracy.

American republicanism was born in the cabin of the Mayflower. Some of us have seen, in the rooms of the Historical Society of Connecticut, the very old Holland chest, on which the instrument was drawn up and signed, and felt an honorable pride in our descent from the original democracy of America!

The colony our fathers planted commenced with an *independent religion*.

They had fled from establishments, and thus left behind them the greatest tyranny of the age. Beyond the waters, they determined to place themselves and their children beyond the reach of hierarchal power. A devout and useful clergy they would reverence. Bible instruction they would heed. They would rise up before the man of God. But conscience was to be sacred. None should rob them of the right of private judgment. If, in self-defence, they fell somewhat into the religious fault of the age, and oppressed some who differed from them, they early saw the error and removed the wrong. Had the Puritans brought with them an established priesthood, to set up on the frozen shores of New England their ghostly domain, Roger Williams would never have consummated in Rhode Island the entire separation of Church from State. The *independent church of John Robinson*, first of England, then of Holland, transferred by Brewster

to the shores of the New world, was the *mother of modern religious liberty* ; liberty that was first begotten in Geneva, developed in Scotland, born in England, rocked in the Pilgrim ship on the ocean, preserved through a periled childhood in the colonies, but grown to maturity in the United States of America !

If afterwards taught a bolder and purer liberty, it was the vigorous constitution and indomitable moral courage inherited from the Puritans that brought the child to final and reliable independence. It is glory enough for Roger Williams that he was the child's guide.

Again : The Pilgrims commenced their colony in the *right circumstances*.

The *isolated position* of the colony was favorable to the maintainence of their principles. They were far enough removed from the French on the North, and the Spanish on the South, not to be corrupted by the contact. Therefore they were not tempted by the courteous lasciviousness of the one, nor hardened by the cruel avarice of the other. Moreover, the shadow of the old world did not reach over the waters, to overawe them by its towering pride, its giant power, its monstrous monopolies. The presence of no pompous forms tempted their children to depart from the simplicity of their worship. The splendor of no Court seduced their posterity from the plain virtues of democracy. No standing army burdened the industrious and corrupted the young. The distance, the expense, the terrors of the voyage, the destitution of the colonies, kept from their settlements the vicious poor, and the vagrant beggars and idlers of older lands.

Their independence of *government patronage* freed them from many embarrassments. The burdens of the East were not, therefore, entailed on the West by compact. Greater equality of condition was thus secured. The feudal system was not established among them to create monopolies, aristocracies and oppressions. The right of primogeniture soon yielded to the necessity of the times and the spirit of the people. Lands were freehold. A system of public registry was established which has become almost universal. Thus the subdivision of the soil among the people broke up and prevented great estates, and so, by equalizing the condition of the people, laid a sure basis of a popular government.

*Society, too, was starting on new soil.* It could, therefore, start with every advantage for progress. There were no old systems to pull down. No inertia of prejudice was first to be overcome. No force of custom was to be resisted. There was not even the ruins of old things to remove. But at once the pioneers of civil and religious liberty could begin to build on their chosen foundation, and after their own model. They did so; and our great Republic is their eulogy.

Again: The colony of the Puritans was planted in the *right place*.

New England owes much of her character to her rocks, her frosts, and her rugged hills. Not one of the gorgeous colors with which the early navigators had painted the scenes of their discoveries belonged to the land first trodden by the Pilgrims. The sands of Cape Cod, the barren hillocks that stretch away from the Plymouth shore, the gravelly beds and rocky slopes that bore the stunted heath, or sent

up between the crevices the gnarly oak, these promised to the Pilgrim explorer only a hard-earned livelihood. The tardy spring, the blasting winds, the frequent drought of summer, the premonitory autumn, the hastening winter, these taught him the stern necessity of industry and economy. The beautiful valley of the Connecticut did not soon tempt them to pleasanter homes and easier and more abundant harvests. Not one stream rolled down to them its golden sand to draw them hurriedly from the shore. Mountains and forests and the savage foe confined them to a narrow compass, till their united strength had started one mother colony of industry, purity, intelligent liberty, and independent piety. Afflictions, toils, perils, privations, kept them long looking up to God, strengthened them against the tendencies to corruption, and made knowledge, liberty and religion the only valuable legacy they could bequeath to their children.

To the untempting soil, the severe climate, the absence of gold, the want of inducement for the investment of capital, to these we owe it that the avaricious and bigoted Spaniard had not defeated the English occupancy of the land by the slavery of the Indian tribes, and by the double yoke of Spain and Italy. To those natural qualities of New England which demand fortitude of mind and hardihood of body, do we owe in a great degree those social, intellectual and religious excellencies so peculiarly her own. Had Massachusetts been as Cuba in nature she would have been as Cuba in condition. Had New England been as Mexico in minerals she would have been as Mexico in morals. And without the religious as well as intellectual basis, no where so well laid as in the land of our Fathers, our Republic would have



been like their's, the prey of priestly and military despotism, and the contempt of the world.

Had wind and tide borne the Mayflower southward, and by the "Father of Waters" introduced the Pilgrims to the great valley of the West, the present history of New England would not have been written. The history of emigration has too sadly proved how slow are the sons and daughters of the educated and the pious to build school houses and churches, where a little labor rewards with plenty, and a small investment hastens fortune. The Islands of the sea, and these attractive shores, are strewn with wrecks to admonish even the descendants of the Puritans, of the dangers of perpetual summer, easy indulgence, and abundant gold.

Rough New England!

Hard to plough her stony hills,  
Hard to till her sandy plains,  
Hard her winds and storms to breast,  
Hard her wintry coasts to brave.

But the granite of her hills is more precious than our quartz. Her plains have yielded greater riches than our placers. She has given *men, principles, and institutions*, as an example and a standard to the world!

Not one stone too many have our fathers turned. Not one drop of sweat or blood too much have they shed to subdue the soil, the climate, or the foe. Their sons and daughters, while they enjoy the rich inheritance left them, are proud of the hard muscle and enduring self-sacrifice by which it was earned.

It is almost needless to say, in conclusion, that the first colony of New England was planted by the *right men*.

The character of the Puritans may have been austere.

But stuff less sturdy would have yielded to the stern necessities of the times. The times demanded just such men. The times created them. The times continued them till the establishment of their great principles required them no longer.

They were indeed a peculiar people. But their peculiarities were not without reason. They grew out of their principles. Consistency demanded them. True, they were odd; but they were honest. They trusted God, yet helped themselves. They loved to pray, but as we know full well, dared to fight. They loved England, but preferred freedom. They loved liberty, but they cherished law. They obeyed law, but resisted tyranny. They acknowledged a king, but the very first government they established was the germ of subsequent independence of the crown. They revered the ministry, yet made the spiritual as well as civil officer dependant on their choice. If for awhile they were intolerant, they were never hypocritical. If not gallant, they were brave. If not courteous, they were true. If they flattered not kings, they eventually elevated the people to sovereignty. If they discarded the crucifix, they all the more honored Christ and loved the church. If they placed the Bible before the classics, and the clergy before the magistrate, they also valued learning, and maintained the law. If they discouraged display and amusements, they ennobled man by enthroning the virtues. If they undervalued refinements, they taught every child of the colony to read, to work, to pray. The superficial observer may sneer at their oddities, but every student of their history must admire their lives. Self-exiled from their country, persecution had only developed their great qualities for great deeds.

They were *Englishmen*. They were, therefore, the world's best seed with which to start on a new and ample soil a giant race. England may well be proud of America: but America should revere England. Her soil is sacred with the dust of the good and great. Only Old England could have been mother of the New. Of all nations her monarchy only could have developed into the constitutional republicanism of America. No other land could have produced the Pilgrims of 1620.

But the Festival of today is not all joyous. New England mourns, and we mourn with her. Her greatest son now sleeps with her fathers. She has other sons, but she weeps as though she were childless. Not till she gives the world another WEBSTER will she be comforted. But while the world remember Webster, she and the whole Union will have reason to be proud. For he lent dignity to man. He gave fame to his country. He made her literature classical. He elevated the standard of her courts. He made her Senate a house of nobles. He imparted greatness to her statesmanship. He widened her policy. He centralized her power. He immortalized her Constitution. He gave to the old Bay State, the Commonwealth of the Pilgrim Fathers, her first, her proper place in the Revolution and the Union. That Union he lived to preserve "one and inseperable." On the floor of Congress he had no equal. In the office of State he had no rival. Before a bench of judges his logic was irresistible. Over a jury his power was complete. On great public occasions, and in all great political emergencies, he always bore away with him the hearts of his countrymen.

And he bore them to the tomb. That tomb he had long

before built at home. That home he had selected near the Bay where the Mayflower anchored, and not far from the Rock on which the Pilgrims landed. Thirty-two years ago, on the second centennial of that memorable event, Webster stood on that Rock and paid a tribute to his fathers worthy of the son.

But the great man has lain him down to rest with the Puritans who sleep around him. Yet his voice will long fall powerful with mighty words on the ears of judges, jurors, deliberative bodies, and breathless or applauding multitudes. Long will the grandeur of his person rise up to overawe admiring men. Ever will the memory of those who saw and heard him retain the impression of his presence. New Hampshire has no such granite left. She gave to Massachusetts the choicest block from her mountains, to cut and fit for that pillar in the Capitol which has just crumbled into dust.

Sons and daughters of New England! You are the representatives of a land which is a model for every other. You belong to a family whose dead are the pride of the living. *Preserve your birth-right.*

By virtue, that frowns on vice; by integrity, that scorns a bribe; by industry, that honors labor; by patriotism, that lives for coming generations; by religion, that builds national grandeur on intelligence, justice, and truth, live worthy of your ancestry.

*Here is our Colony.* No higher ambition could urge us to noble deeds than, on the basis of the colony of Plymouth, to make CALIFORNIA THE MASSACHUSETTS OF THE PACIFIC.

































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